

66 P.C. Of Gaithersburg Citizens Unregistered

(From The Montgomery County Bureau)

According to a recently completed Community Attitudes survey of the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Gaithersburg, 66 per cent of the residents are not registered to vote, and nearly 58 per cent of them do not know when or where to register to vote in a town election.

A questionnaire was circulated with 38 questions dealing with different facets of community endeavor. About 200 man hours

went into the survey and about 20 minutes was spent in each home visited. An additional 40 hours were spent in analysis of the results.

The Jaycees will seek to solve the problems uncovered.

The survey showed that in some areas a majority of the people knew little or nothing about the subjects queried while on others they seemed very well informed.

More than half of those questioned were aware that Gaithersburg has prepared new zoning laws and ordinances. However, nearly 50 per cent didn't know whether the present zoning law or the new zoning ordinance were satisfactory.

Opinions Close

Opinions were very close on medical services in the town. More than 60 per cent felt that such services were inadequate. According to the survey report, doctors in Gaithersburg, "will not make house calls or emergency calls." More than 75 per cent of the respondents felt a hospital was needed in the immediate area. The nearest one now is 10 miles away.

Other facilities or services the majority of the residents questioned felt the area needed was

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more and better public transportation (75 per cent), more public parking (67 per cent), fewer apartments (66 per cent), more sidewalks (63 per cent), more recreational facilities (61 per cent) and more family type restaurants (67 per cent).

An overwhelming 92 per cent felt automatic traffic lights should be erected at the intersection of Maryland 355 and Shady Grove Road, where one is now in the process of being installed, and that a light was needed at the intersection of Maryland 355, Brookes Avenue and East Diamond Avenue.

The latter intersection is at

the northern end of the bridge over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks through the center of Gaithersburg. East Diamond Avenue runs beside the bridge for about 250 feet before reaching the intersection.

Some 67 per cent of those questioned favored lowering the railroad tracks through the center of town. However, most felt that the almost prohibitive cost of such a project was not worth it.

Catch - All Queries

There were three large catch-all type questions asked in the survey by the Jaycees. One dealt with likes in the community, one with dislikes, and the third with ways to make the community better.

Some of the likes of the residents of the town included its smallness, friendliness, quiet, reasonable rents, homes, police protection, convenient location, segregation, apartments and the chimes on Grace Methodist Church.

Several of the dislikes included too many apartments, too high real estate prices, cost of homes and land out of proportion, high cost of living, lack of recreational facilities, town council, noise, railroad, race track through town (Summit Avenue) erratic zoning, saloons, backwardness and reluctance to change, lack of progress, no initiative, old buildings, low water pressure, lack of organized government.

In answer to what would be necessary to make Gaithersburg a better community, some responded by calling for more and better shopping facilities, more recreational facilities, better planning, improved parking, better public transportation, better streets, pay for the mayor, more care to the central section of the town, more services for the tax dollar, more people, more business, good theater, family style restaurants, more control of teenagers, control of alcoholic beverages, more industry, swimming pool, better communication between the voters and the government, more civic pride and have the apartment dwellers pick up the trash in their own areas.